

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0680

DEPT PASS USIA

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY UR US TU

SUBJECT: GREEK CYPRIOT PRESS FEB 16-18

1. SUMMARY: PRESS HAS GIVEN FULL AND ENTHUSIASTIC PLAY TO RECENT EXPRESSIONS OF SOVIET INTEREST IN CYPRUS. STATEMENTS WHICH LACK OF SUBSTANCE WOULD BE NOTABLE ONLY FOR THEIR LACK OF SUBSTANCE ARE BEING BALLYHOOED WITH GREAT FERVOR. END SUMMARY.

2. SUNDAY, MONDAY AND TUESDAY PAPERS ALL GIVE PROMINENT HEADLINES TO RECENT TASS STATEMENTS AND TO JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY WILSON/BREZHNEV AND KISSINGER/GROMYKO. LEFTIST AND COMMUNIST
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PRESS TRIUMPHANTLY CLAIM THAT SUPPORT FOR CYPRUS' TERRITORIAL

INTEGRITY, ETC., FOR MAKARIOS GOVERNMENT, AND FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS UNDOUBTEDLY RESULT OF AGGRESSIVE AND DETERMINED SOVIET PRESSURE IN DRAFTING COMMUNIQUE. EVEN CLERIDES-SUPPORTING AGON HAILS RUSSIAN STATEMENTS AS "THE MOST CATEGORICAL EXPRESSION OF RUSSIAN INTEREST IN CYPRUS SO FAR". OTHER PAPERS, INCLUDING COMMUNIST MOUTHPIECE HARAVGHI, NOTE THAT RUSSIAN MOVES ARE ONLY MOST IMPORTANT PART OF WIDER INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT DEVELOPING FOR CYPRUS. HARAVGHI CLAIMS SOVIET UNION "IS THROWING THE ENTIRE WEIGHT OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY" FOR PROTECTION OF CYPRUS AND CITES AS EVIDENCE: "STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENT BY TASS; FEB 17 CALL ON MAKARIOS BY LOCAL SOVIET AMBASSADOR; JOINT WILSON/BREZHNEV COMMUNIQUE; AND "TOUGH LINE" TAKEN BY GROMYKO IN HIS KISSINGER MEETINGS. (COMMENT: SOVIETS AND LOCAL COMMUNISTS GETTING EXCELLENT MILAGE FROM VERY GENERALLY WORDED AND CAREFUL STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT. PRESS, PUBLIC AND EVEN GOC ARE GRABBING AT THESE ARTFULLY-CONSTRUCTED/ORCHESTRATED HANDFULS OF STRAW AND GIVING THEM GREAT CREDENCE.)

3. ALL MONDAY PAPERS PROMINENTLY CARRY STORY FROM ATHENS SUNDAY KATHIMERINI RE 500 SOVIET TECHNICIANS BEING SENT TO CYPRUS TO ASSIST WITH ECONOMIC REHABILITATION. FEB 18 PHILELEFTHEROS NOTES THAT SUCH TECHNICIANS MAY OR MAY NOT ACTUALLY COME TO CYPRUS BUT POINTS OUT THAT SUCH OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE IF CAPITALIZED UPON. IN FEBRUARY 18 DAILY PRESS BRIEFING, GOC SPOKESMAN STATED STORY WAS UNFOUNDED. DENIAL CARRIED UNOBTUSIVELY IN SEVERAL BUT NOT ALL PAPERS.

4. FEBRUARY 18 MACHI BANNER HEADLINED THAT TURKEY RECEIVED AMERICAN MILITARY AID AFTER FEBRUARY 5. PAPER REPORTED THAT AMERICAN VESSEL "YOUNG AMERICA" CARRYING MILITARY MATERIAL FROM NAPLES TO TURKEY UNLOADED ITS CARGO AT IZMIR AND ISTANBUL. SO FAR STORY HAS NOT BEEN PICKED UP AND CAPITALIZED UPON BY OTHER PAPERS. (ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT GETTING US FACTS OF THIS STORY, IF ANY, IN EVENT WE ARE QUERIED..)

5. FEBRUARY 17 DEMOCRATIA (COMMUNIST WEEKLY) HEADLINED "SHOCKING REVELATIONS" OF AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL BEING PERMANENTLY STATIONED AT BRITISH BASES AND CONTINUOUS FLIGHTS BY AMERICAN SPY AIRCRAFT. STORY ALLEGED THAT MILITARY MATERIAL BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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FLOWN IN DAILY TO BASES, THAT TWO SPY PLANES THERE ARE CAPABLE OF SURVEYING ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST, AND THAT AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL WEAR BRITISH OR UN UNIFORMS IN ATTEMPT TO DISGUISE THEIR PRESENCE. PAPER ALSO NOTES THESE PERSONNEL ARE TRAVELING TO TURKISH-CONTROLLED AREAS OF CYPRUS AND THESE MOVEMENTS ARE RELATED TO AMERICAN PLANS FOR NAVAL AND AIR BASES IN NORTHERN TURKISH-CONTROLLED CYPRUS. GOC SPOKESMAN, IN REPLYING TO FEB 17 QUESTION, SAID CYPRUS AUTHORITIES KNOW

NOTHING RE REPORTS OF AMERICAN TROOPS OR RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT
AT AKROTIRI. DENIAL BACKPAGED IN ONE NEWSPAPER.

5. COMMENT: WHAT IN OTHER CLIMES MIGHT BE TOLERANTLY TERMED
"ANTICS OF THE PRESS" WOULD BE MORE HUMOROUS HERE WERE IT NOT
FOR PROPENSITY OF CYPRIOTS TO BELIEVE ABSOLUTELY EVEN WILDEST
OF "NEWS" STORIES. THE ABOVE TREATMENT - A DAILY OCCURRENCE -
IS NOT ONLY TOLERATED BUT EVEN SUBTLY ENCOURAGED BY GOS
AS PALLATIVE OR VENT FOR POPULAR FRUSTRATION. WHEN
EMB OFFICERS POINT OUT TO CYPRIOT CONTACTS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP
OF PRESS AND PUBLIC TEMPERATURE, ONLY RESPONSE IS USUALLY
A SHRUG OF THE SHOULDERS. IT IS LONG-TIME FAVORITE MAKARIOS
TACTIC TO ORCHESTRATE SUCH "PUBLIC PRESSURES" TO WHICH HE
MUST THEN, IN BEST DEMOCRATIC FASHION, BE RESPONSIVE.
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